

## A RESOLUTION

1 Observing June 19, 2016, as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in  
2 Pennsylvania in recognition of June 19, 1865, the date on  
3 which slavery was abolished finally in all regions of the  
4 United States.

5 WHEREAS, For 151 years, Americans of African descent have  
6 celebrated June 19th as "Juneteenth Independence Day" or  
7 "Juneteenth National Freedom Day" in recognition of the human  
8 struggles of their enslaved descendants; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade  
10 Database, between 1525 and 1866, the duration of the  
11 transatlantic slave trade to the Americas, an estimated 12.5  
12 million men, women and children were captured and forcibly  
13 transported in bondage from their African homelands to the  
14 Americas; and

15 WHEREAS, An estimated 10.7 Africans, mostly from the Congo,  
16 Nigeria, Angola and Senegambia, survived the hazardous Middle  
17 Passage and disembarked in North America, the Caribbean and  
18 South America; and

1       WHEREAS, The forced migration of Africans to the United  
2 States involved an estimated 472,000 men, women and children,  
3 nearly 83,000 of whom did not survive the Middle Passage; and

4       WHEREAS, History characterizes the transatlantic slave trade  
5 as a brutal and horrific commercial and economic enterprise and  
6 the enslavement of Africans as cruel, exploitative and  
7 dehumanizing; and

8       WHEREAS, Lasting for nearly four centuries, the transatlantic  
9 slave trade represents one of the longest and most sustained  
10 assaults on the life, integrity and dignity of human beings in  
11 history and one of the greatest tragedies in the history of  
12 humanity; and

13       WHEREAS, With the enactment of The Act Prohibiting  
14 Importation of Slaves of 1807, the United States outlawed the  
15 transatlantic slave trade in 1808; and

16       WHEREAS, Although the 1807 Federal legislation ended the  
17 legality of the transatlantic slave trade in the United States,  
18 the law was not universally enforced; and

19       WHEREAS, Enslaved Africans continued to be smuggled into the  
20 United States, and the domestic slave trade was not affected;  
21 and

22       WHEREAS, On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued  
23 the Emancipation Proclamation, which proclaimed all enslaved  
24 Africans to be free; and

25       WHEREAS, News of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach  
26 the frontier, in particular the State of Texas and the other  
27 Southwestern States, until Union troops, commanded by Major  
28 General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19,  
29 1865; and

30       WHEREAS, On that day in Galveston, more than two years after

1 President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, Major  
2 General Granger announced the end of the Civil War and issued  
3 General Order No. 3, which proclaimed all slaves to be free,  
4 including absolute equality in personal rights; and

5 WHEREAS, Slavery, as an institution, was not officially  
6 abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the  
7 Constitution of the United States on December 6, 1865; and

8 WHEREAS, In 1997, the 105th Congress of the United States  
9 passed House Joint Resolution 56 and Senate Joint Resolution 11  
10 to officially recognize Juneteenth as the Independence Day  
11 Observance of Americans of African descent; and

12 WHEREAS, People nationwide join together to celebrate June 19  
13 as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in recognition of the end of  
14 slavery in all regions of the United States and to commemorate  
15 the survival and determination of African men, women and  
16 children who survived the month-long journeys across the  
17 Atlantic Ocean (the Middle Passage) and debarked to a life as  
18 slave; and

19 WHEREAS, The faith, courage and strength of character  
20 demonstrated by former slaves and the descendants of former  
21 slaves remain an example for all people of the United States;  
22 and

23 WHEREAS, The United States is the worldwide symbol of  
24 democracy and freedom; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives:

26 (1) observe June 19, 2016, as "Juneteenth Independence  
27 Day" in Pennsylvania in honor of the memory, resilience,  
28 courage and determination of enslaved persons and of all  
29 Americans, living and dead, who embody Dr. King's quote:  
30 "None are free until all are free";

1           (2) recognize that the abolition of slavery is part of  
2 the history and heritage of this Commonwealth; and

3           (3) encourage and support the continued celebration and  
4 observance of "Juneteenth Independence Day" with appropriate  
5 ceremonies, activities and programs in order to provide an  
6 opportunity for the people of this Commonwealth to learn  
7 about the past and better understand the institutions and  
8 experiences that shaped our nation.